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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

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IT has been my weekly endeavour, for ſome years, to entertain and inſtruct the public to the beſt of my abilities. That I am thought entertaining is beyond diſpute; for as no one peruſes a periodical paper for conſcience ſake, or by way of penance, it is evident, that ſince I am read, I pleaſe.

How far I may have attained the other purpoſe of my papers, that of inſtructing, is another queſtion, and which cannot be eaſily reſolved. The pen of a writer, like the hand of time, works imperceptibly: and perhaps the reformation which may be occaſioned by theſe my labours, will not be completed in leſs than a century. Thus much however I may venture to affirm, that I have done no harm. All my cotempora-

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ries may not, perhaps, be able to ſay as much for their writings. People of faſhion have not more abounded in thoughtleſſneſs and prodigality ſince the publication of the WORLD. Legal debts are no worſe paid at preſent than they were formerly; nor have the weekly bills of adultery conſiderably increaſed. Though I may not have been able to hew off the *marble*, and bring out the *man*, I have not ſpoilt the *block*; and ſome happier artiſt may yet exerciſe his chizel upon it.

IT has always been my particular endeavour to avoid blame; for to pleaſe everybody is a vain attempt: and yet to meet with cenſure where applauſe was due, is affecting to a generous ſpirit: ſuch has been my lot. Many of my readers will hardly believe me when I tell them, that I have been cenſured for not writing in a ſerious manner. The accuſation is indeed ſevere; for it implies that I have miſtaken the genius of the age. Serioufneſs is not, I think, the preſent diſpoſition of Britons, however they may have been celebrated for that quality in former times. Why then ſhould I be ſerious, who write for the youthful, for the well-dreſſed, and for *everybody one knows*? The very word *ſerioufneſs* is expelled from polite life; it is never mentioned at all, but in *ſome account of the author*, or in funeral panegyrics; and even then, it is only applied to writers of good books, or to ancient maiden gentlewomen. What then has poor Adam Fitz-Adam done, that he ſhould be obliged to turn parſon, and write *ſeriouſly*?

BUT there are certain ſeaſons and occaſions, that call upon me for real ſerioufneſs; occaſions where humour and ridicule would be ill applied, and juſtly cenſurable. Such is the preſent; when on the morrow of this day a general humiliation is appointed, to deprecate the

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Divine diſpleaſure, and to implore deliverance from thoſe dreadful devaſtations, which have ſo lately alarmed or deſtroyed a neighbouring people, and laid their metropolis in ruins. For an occaſion ſo ſolemn, I have reſerved a letter which I received ſome time ſince from a very valuable correſpondent, and which I ſhall here lay before my readers, as the propereſt preparation that I am able to preſent them with.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

I SHALL make no apology for addreſſing the public, by the channel of your paper, on an occurrence that has ſo lately and juſtly alarmed us; I mean the deſolation of Liſbon, and the adjacent country. The terror we expreſs, on the bare hearing of that diſtant calamity, ſtrongly implies the relation we bear as men to the unhappy ſufferers; and the pity and ſupport we give them, ſhow how readily we ſuppoſe the caſe might have been our own. Nor are we indeed wholly exempted from a ſhare in the event: we are not deſtroyed, but we are admoniſhed. In this ſenſe, the ſhock was general; and though the blow was partial, the warning is univerſal.

AMONG the many hints of improvements ſuggeſted by ſo awful a devaſtation, the neceſſity of a general reformation ſeems a very obvious one. A ſmall acquaintance with mankind will ſhow us how vice and immorality prevail, under the ſpecious names of cuſtom and politeneſs; while virtue, if not ridiculed, is too often and generally neglected. Irreligion and prophaneneſs furniſh conſtant matter of reproof for the pulpit; and the enormities that attend them, employment for the hand

hand of juſtice. If then the Divine diſpleaſure is to be dreaded for the impieties of a nation, how ſmall is our ſecurity!

We join in our concern for a people or city, ruined by ſo ſudden and fatal a ſtroke as an earthquake, and image to ourſelves the horrors of the ſcene; but how faintly! for who can fully deſcribe a diſtreſs, which guilt only can aggravate, and the teſtimony of a good conſcience only alleviate?

The inſtability of every earthly good, is a truth ſo well known both from precept and experience, that it may be thought unneceſſary to conſider it here, as another leſſon contained in ſo melancholy a providence: but to me there appears ſomething more ſtriking in the ruins of an earthquake, than the uſual viciſſitudes of life ſubject us to. In the ordinary changes of life, the loſs of wealth, honour and friends is often gradual and expected; and our reſignation in proportion leſs painful: we are (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) weaned from enjoyments we know ſo precarious; but to be robbed at once of all we have, and all we love, and, perhaps, ſurvive, the ſad ſpectators of our own ruin, is to be attacked when we are leaſt on our guard, and to feel the evils of a whole life, in a moment. If we look round us, we ſhall ſee what unwearied application and prudent circumſpection are neceſſary to obviate the misfortunes we daily encounter; bnt what application can befriend, what circumſpection warn, when rocks fail us, and ſeas overwhelm us?

Another leſſon we may learn from this calamity, is humility. What weak pretenſions to preeminence are riches, honour and applauſe, when a moment

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can efface them? Death, in his uſual progreſs, ſhews us their inſufficiency; but by ſlower approaches. The trophy out-lives the hero, and the monument the patriot; wealth and titles deſcend to future generations; and though the prince and the peaſant meet the ſame fate, the eulogy of the one ſurvives, and diſtinguiſhes him from the other. But here, all characters are blended, diſtinctions loſt, the rich levelled, and the ambitious humbled. Such a general confuſion may well alarm us, and make us look with indifference on the objects of onr preſent envy: for what is treaſure, but a ſecurity againſt want? and what is important, that is not permanent?

BUT not to dwell any longer on particulars, which every one's own reflections will naturally enlarge on, we have here a faint picture of that awful day, "when "the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, and the "Heavens paſs away with a great noiſe." The reader will, I doubt not, be pleaſed with a deſcription of this ſcene, as given us by a celebrated genius of the preſent age.

——*At the deſtin'd hour,*
By the loud trumpet ſummon'd to the charge,
See, all the formidable ſons of fire,
Eruptions, earthquakes, comets, lightnings, play
Their various engines; all at once diſgorge
Their blazing magazines; and take by ſtorm
This poor terreſtial citadel of man.
AMAZING PERIOD! *when each mountain height*
Out-burns VESUVIUS! *rocks eternal pour*
Their melted maſs, as rivers once they pour'd;
Stars ruſh; and final RUIN *fiercely drives*
Her plowſhare o'er creation!——

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